

no. 5

A
DISCOURSE
Concerning the
UNITY
OF THE
CATHOLICK CHURCH
Maintained in the
Church of *ENGLAND*.

LONDON,

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T H E C O N T E N T S.

THe divisions of Christendom are much to be lamented; the effects of them being exceeding evil Page 1.

Christ made all needful provisions against such Dissensions amongst Christians P. 2.

To this end he established a Spiritual Society or Church on Earth P. 3.

This Church, with the Unity of it, the Romish-Church appropriateth to it self P. 3.

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THE

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THE
UNITY
OF THE
CATHOLICK CHURCH
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Hosoever with an impartial eye, and a truly religious concern for the Honour of God, the Credit of the Gospel, and the Salvation of men, looks into the estate of Christendom; he will scarce find any greater cause of sorrowful Reflections than from the many Divisions, and Animosities, which have distracted, and separated its parts.

These have opened the mouths, and whet the tongues of profest enemies to reviling. Invectives and profane Scoffs against our Blessed Lord himself, and his holy Religion, and stifled the first thoughts of admitting the most convincing Truths to a debate among Jews, Turks, or Pagans, and stopt their ears against the wisest Charms.

To no one cause can we more reasonably impute the small progress which Christianity hath made in the World for a thousand years past. The same contests have as pernicious influence at home upon the

B

Faith

The Union of the Catholick Church

Faith or manners of those within the Pale of the Church.

Men are hereby too soon tempted into some degrees of Scepticism about very material Points of Christian Doctrine, in which they observe so many to differ among themselves. Others are the more easily seduced to seek and make much of all Arguments, whereby to baffle or weaken the clearest evidences for their conviction: and they seldom continue long in the same persuasion with those, with whom they will not maintain the same Communion. Thus Schisms have generally ended in Heresies.

As mischievous are the effects of these Distractions upon the manners of Christians. There are many vitious, and disorderly passions; such as Anger, Wrath, Hatred, Revenge, Pride, Censoriousness, &c. which take Sanctuary therein, and under that shelter put in their claim for the height of Christian Graces, and the most holy zeal for God and his Cause. Every where they break, or loosen the Discipline of the Church, which should guard its children from doing amiss, or restore them after it, when the last and most capital punishment of being thrust out of its Communion is like to be little dreaded, where many voluntarily desert it with the highest pretences of better advantage elsewhere.

Now though this matter of fact, confirmed by woeful experience, be a subject too sad for a long meditation, or passionate enlargement, yet is it no more than what might have been foreseen, without a Spirit of Prophecy, to follow from the corrupt nature, and depraved estate of mankind not otherwise rectified. Wherefore we must suppose that our ever blessed Saviour, in the Foundations of his holy Institution, made all needful provision to prevent these fatal miscariages.

By

By the sufficient Revelation of all Fundamental Articles of Belief. By the as full Declaration of all the necessary precepts of good life. By inculcating frequently, and pressing most emphatically those commands concerning Love, Peace, Unity, Good Order, Humility, Meekness, Patience, &c. directly opposed to those contentions, in every Page of the New Testament: These it may suffice but to name.

It will soon be granted, after the best provision of Rules, and most convincing Arguments and Motives to strengthen them, that there will be need of some Government to encourage all in their performance, to restrain some from offering violence to them, and to provide for many emergencies.

Our Blessed Lord and Master, therefore, for the better security of his Truth, and the safer conduct of those which adhere to it, establish'd a Society or Church in the World, which he purchased with the most inestimable price, dignified with the highest Privileges, encouraged with the largest Promises, back'd with the most ample Authority, and will always defend with the strongest Guard, against all Power, or Policy on Earth or under the Earth; so that, as he hath told us, *the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.*

But now where this Church is to be found, and what are the measures of our Obligation to it, hath been a long and great debate, especially between *us* and the *Romanists*. In most of their late Controversial Books they have seemed ready to wave disputes about particular points, in hopes of greater advantage, which they promise themselves from this venerable name, and that bold, though most false and presumptuous claim which they lay to the thing it self, even exclusive to all others; which will appear from the true, but short and plain state of the case between us, the chief design of this attempt.

The Unity of the Catholick Church

Now that we may not charge them, nor they us falsely or rashly ;

I. It may be convenient *first*, to lay down some Principles concerning this Church in which they and we seem mostly agreed, though all our Writers express not themselves alike clearly herein.

II. To propound the chief Bands of Unity within this Church.

III. To mark out the most obvious Defections from them by the Romanists.

IV. To shew the Reformation in the Church of *England* proceeded, and was framed with all due regard to the preservation of them.

V. To clear it of the most common Objections.

VI. To consider the strong obligations from hence upon all sorts of Dissenters among us to embrace, and continue in its Communion.

I. The former will soon be dispatcht, which I reduce to the following particulars.

1. That our Blessed Saviour always had, and always will have a Church in the World, in which his Doctrine hath been, and shall be so far profest, and his Sacraments so effectually administred, that they who rightly improve them may not want necessary supplies for their present spiritual life, or future hopes of Salvation : though the extent of the Church as to its boundaries, and the perfection of it in degrees may be vastly different at one time, and in one place from another. This many *Prophecies* in the Old Testament, and *Promises* from our Saviour in the New give abundant ground for our Faith to rely upon, and the experience of all Ages hitherto hath confirmed.

2. That this Church is a distinct Society within itself, furnished with sufficient Authority in some to Govern, and Obligation in others to be Subject, necessary to every Society ; which the power of the Keys given by

by our Lord to receive in, or shut out, and the exercise of Discipline from Divine Precept, and Scripture Examples evince beyond all exception. But then this Ecclesiastical Power, in whomsoever placed, or strained to what height soever, can never extend to vacate, or change the express Institutions of Christ, or take away our Obligation to his revealed Truth, and direct Commands. In case of any competition the Apostles defence may be ours, *We must obey God rather than men.* And St. Pauls profession, *We can do nothing against the Truth, but for the Truth.* And again, *If we or an Angel from Heaven preach any other Gospel, &c. let him be accursed,* Gal. i. 8,

3. This Church must be visible, as every Society is more or less, whose parts are so, and whose Profession must be so. Our entrance into it is in a visible manner by Baptismal Initiation. Our obliged Communion with it is in diverse outward sensible Acts, which the representation of it by a Body or Building might prove. More clearly it is likened to a *City on a Hill, which cannot be hid*, Mat. 5. 14. Set up as the *Light of the world*, an Ensign to the Gentiles, which all Nations should flee unto, or else it would witness against them; wherein its Followers should take Sanctuary, and find a Refuge.

4. Within these Boundaries we have the only hopes of safety here and happiness hereafter. What God may do by his supereminent unaccountable power in an extraordinary case is presumption for us but to inquire into. Out of this Ark there is no prospect given to us of any escape from the Universal Deluge. (a) All the spiritual Promises concerning this life or a better are made to this Church, the Members of his Body who is the

a. C. Cyprian Ep. 60. p. 143. Ed. Ox.
*Si aliquis ex talibus fuerit apprehensus,
 non est quod sibi quasi in confessione No-
 minis blandiatur, cum constet si occisi ejus-
 modi extra Ecclesiam fuerint, Fidei coro-
 nam non esse, sed pœnam potius esse perfidiæ.*

Head.

*Nec in Domo Dei inter unanimes habitatu-
ros esse, quos videmus de pacificâ & Di-
vinâ Domo furore discordiæ recessisse.
S. August. & Ceteri in Conc. Cirtensi adv.
Donatistas. Ep. 152. T. 2. p. 696. Edit.
Frob. 556. Quisquis ergo ab hac Ecclesiâ
Catholicâ fuerit separatus, quantumlibet
lautilibet se vivere existimet, hoc solo
scelere quod à Christi unitate disjunctus
est, non habebit vitam. Sed ira Dei ma-
net super eum. Quisquis autem in hac
Ecclesiâ bene vixerit, nihil ei præjudicant aliena peccata. Idem Ep. 204. ad Donatum Pres-
byterum Donatist. T. 2. p. 834. Foris autem ab Ecclesiâ constitutus, & separatus à compage
unitatis, & vinculo Charitatis, æterno supplicio punieris, etiamsi pro Christi nomine vivus incen-
dereris.*

Head. Therefore the Apostles preach to Jews and Gentiles the necessity of receiving this Character. Seeing there is no other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved, as St. Peter attests, Acts 4. 12.

5. This Church is but one. It is an Article of our Faith, exprest in our Creed to believe it so. For *there be many members, yet but one body. One Spirit* quickning all; *One Lord*, and Head over all; *One God* and Father of all; *one Faith*; *one Baptism*; *one Hope* of our Calling in all, as the Apostle argues, Eph. 4. 4, 5, 6, 7, &c.

II. Now we are to enquire what are the chief Bands of Unity in the Church which make, keep, and evidence it to be one; How we may secure our selves within this Garden enclosed, this Spring shut up, this Fountain sealed, as the Ancients usually apply that Cant. 4. 12, to this one Enclosure of the Church.

1. This appears in the *Unity of Belief*, not only inwardly, but in the outward profession of the same Faith which was once delivered to the Saints, and hath been generally preserved, and continued down throughout all Ages of the Church. In testimony whereof the most eminent Bishops upon their first Consecration sent to their Brethren Confessions of their Faith.

2. In the *Unity of* (a) *Charity*, and Affection as Fellow members one of another as well as of the same Head; that *if one suffer, all the rest suffer with it, and if one rejoyce. all rejoyce with it.* Having an intimate Fellow-feeling of all the Good, or Evil, which befalls any joyn'd in so near a Relation, beyond the compassion of ordinary Humanity; whereby we are bound not only to pray for, but by all offices of kindness, and most intimate Affection especially to assist, and relieve each other in the same Household of Faith. So that by our Personal Consecration all our Labours, and Estates are in some measure devoted to the Honour of God, the Service of his Church, and the Necessities of any of its Members.

(a) *Tertullian de præscrip. Hæret. c. 20. p. 209. Sic omnes prima, & Apostolica dum una omnes probant unitatem. Dum est communicatio Pacis, & appellatio Fraternitatis, confesseratio Hospitalitatis, que jura non alia ratio regit, quam ejusdem Sacramenti una traditio.*

S. August. adv. literas Petiliani, T. 7. p. 132. Charitas Christiana nisi in unitate Ecclesie non potest custodiri. & Ibid. p. 473. de bapt. adv. Donatist. l. 6. Etiam si Christi Baptismum usque ad Sacramenti celebrationem perceperunt, tamen vitam aternam nisi per Charitatis unitatem non consequuntur. Et Ibid. de unitate Ecclesie, c. 2. p. 510. Ecclesia Corpus Christi est, unde utique manifestum est eum, qui non est in membris Christi, Christianam salutem habere non posse, membra autem Christi per unitatis Charitatem sibi copulantur, & per eandem Capiti suo coherent, quod est Christus.

3. In the *Unity of Worship*, whereby we are obliged not only to offer up the same Worship for substance, but also in the outward Act to joyn, and communicate with each other therein, to present the same Prayers, and Praises, to celebrate together the same Sacraments, to hear the same Instructions; to frequent the same Religious Assemblies, as much as possible; that we may *with one mind, and with one mouth glorifie God even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Rom. 15. 6.* For as the Command of God, the Honour of his Religion, the Edification of his Church, the Propagation of his Truth, and the peculiar Promise of his Presence, and Blessing require a solemn publick exercise of all Religious Worship in united Congregations; so hereby we
most

most sensibly prove, and secure our unity therein.

(b) *S. Austin. adv. literas Petilliani, T. 7. p. 124. Huic Ecclesie, que per totam terram diffunditur, quisquis non communicat, vi-des cui non com-municat.*

(b) Whoever then needlessly separates himself from this Church, or refuses to joyn in Communion with its Members, so far as it is in his power, where he may, without violence to any Doctrine or Precept of Christ, such a one divides himself from his Body, and so from all the Promises that we know of the Sacred and comfortable Influences of that one Head and one Spirit.

Idem Ep. 50. ad Bonifacium. T. 2. p. 230. Ecclesia Catholica sola est Corpus Christi, cujus ille caput est Salvator Corporis sui. Extra hoc Corpus neminem vivificat Spiritus Sanctus, quia sicut ipse dicit Apostolus Charitas Dei diffusa est in Cordibus nostris per Spiritum Sanctum qui datus est nobis, non est autem particeps Divinae Charitatis qui hostis est Unitatis. Et de Bapt. adv. Do-natist. l. 3. c. 16. T. 7. p. 409. Ipsa est enim Charitas quam non habent, qui ab Ecclesie Catholice Communione præcisi sunt, &c. Non habet Dei Charitatem, qui non diligit Ecclesie Unitatem.

S. Cyprian. de Unitate Ecclesie, p. 113. Inexpiabilis, & gravis culpa discordie nec passione purgatur. Esse Martyr non potest qui in Ecclesia non est: ad regnum pervenire non potest, qui eam que regnatura est, derelinquit.

a Tertullian. Apolog. c. 39. Corpus su-mus de conscientia religionis & disciplina unitate & spei federe. Clerus ad D. Cy-prian. Ep. 30. Ox. Ed. p. 56. Idem enim omnes credimur operati, in quo deprehen-dimur eadem omnes censuræ, & discipline consensione sociati.

Ita etiam argumentatur idem Clerus Rom. adv. Marcionem excommunicatum à Patre suo, & ab his non receptum, in S. Epi-phanio. Hæc. 42. l. 1. T. 3. p. 303. Par. Edit. ἡ συνάμεθα ἀνευ τοῦ ἐπιτεροῦς τῆ πατρὸς οὐ τὸ ποιεῖται, μία ὃ ὅτιν ἡ πίστις, καὶ μία ἡ ὁμολογία, &c.

Synesius Epist. 58. p. 203. de censurâ in Andronicum, Thoanem, & eorum consortes, εἰδὲ πὺς ὡς μικροπολίτην ἀποκυβαλίσει ἢ ἐκκλησίαν, καὶ δὲ τὰς τὸ ἀποκαρύκτες αὐτῆς, ἴσω γέρας ἢ ἐκκλησίαν ἢν μίαν ὁ χριστὸς εἶδεν βύλεται.

4. In the Unity of Discipline, (a) whereby every Act of any particular Church conformable to the Institutions of our Saviour, and the universally received practice of his Church stands confirmed as an Act of the whole Church. Particularly whoever is admitted into it accordingly by Baptism in one place is to be accounted a member of the Church Catholick, and re-ceived into its Communion where-ever he comes, it no evidence ap-pear of his exclusion by any after regular Censure. Likewise into

whatever Office, or Ministration any are orderly ad-mitted in one part thereof, in the same are they to be acknowledged in all others, though without that par-ticular Jurisdiction which they had in their own. But whoever

whosoever lies under any Censure in one Church, he is to be supposed under the same in all others, and not to be received into Communion till the Sentence be reversed by the same Power, or a still higher, and greater Authority; according to the *Fifth Canon of the Council of Nice*, and the design of their *form'd*, and *communicatory Letters*, without which none were to pass from one Church to another. Thus every Church is accountable to its Neighbour Churches, and so to the whole Church for its Actions, that one may not do, what the other undoes, without any regard to this Unity, which would lead to the confusion and distraction of all. Wherefore to put an end to such differences when risen, or obviate any growing mischief thereby, and to receive Appeals from persons who think themselves aggrieved, or injured by their own Bishop or Church, a *Council* of all Bishops in each Province is appointed twice in the year by the same *Canon*, and in many others. But there was no mention then of any farther, or higher Appeal. (b) Thus an amicable correspondence, and intimate communication was maintained between the Neighbour Churches, and their Governours, and by them with others removed at a greater distance throughout the world.

(b) S. Cyprian, *ad Antonianum*, p. 112. Ox. Ed. Cum sit à Christo una Ecclesia per totum mundum in multa membra

divisa, item Episcopatus unus Episcoporum multorum concordie numerositate diffusus. Et Ep. 3. p. 71. Omnis enim nos decet pro Corpore totius Ecclesie, cuius per varias quasque provincias membra digesta sunt excubare.

S. August. *de unitate Ecclesie*, c. 12. T. 7. p. 534. Neque enim quia & in orbe terrarum plurimumque Regna dividuntur, ideo Christiana unitas dividitur, cum in utraque parte Catholica invenitur Ecclesia.

These need no long proof, but may be taken as generally granted; the main dispute will lie in the particular application of the two last.

C

Now

Now to prevent as much as may be all difficulties about them, it may be added to the third of *Unity of Worship*, that it will be very convenient, if not absolutely necessary in any settled established Church, that there be some set Forms of publick Ministrations, without which it is hard for any to know before hand what they joyn with, especially for strangers.

But then these Forms should be as plain, and simple as possible, with as little pretence as can be of any danger to the known Will, and Word of God. For no Obligation whatsoever can tie me to communicate with another in that which he forbids; and it will be a great temptation to more than suspect this danger, when mens private opinions, or fanciful transports are mingled with them, which have little shew of Scripture, or the general practice of the Church in all Ages to justifie them.

The readiest way I know of to prevent that hazard, after all other care about the matters contained, is to endeavour that these Offices be as near alike in all places as can well be, yet every difference in Judgment, when no violence is offered to the Foundation of Catholick Faith and Unity, must not break this Communion, according to that profession of St. *Cyprian* (a) Judging no man, nor excluding him from the right of Communion if he think otherwise; where the dispute was thought of no mean concern, especially in this cause. Which (b) St. *Augustin* oft alledges against the *Donatists*, that boasted so much of St. *Cyprians* judgment against his declared practice. To the same purpose may be applied the treatment of (c) St. *Polycarp* in *Rome* by *Anicetus* the Bishop, though they differed about the time of the celebration of *Easter*, and in other points, which could not be agreed between them; yet this last not only invited the former to Communion with him, but

a P. 229. Ox.
Ed. in Concil.
Carthaginensi
de baptizandis
Hereticis. Nemi-
nem judicantes
aut à jure com-
munionis, si di-
versum senserit
amoventes.

b De Bapt. adv.
Donat. l. 2. T. 7.
p. 39 l. & sape
ibid.

c Euseb. Eccles.
Hist. l. 5. c. 26.

but also to celebrate the sacred Eucharist in his Church, as the words are generally interpreted; which *St. Irenaeus* not long after urges strongly against *Victor*, who was hastening to excommunicate the *Asian Churches* for the same difference, contrary to his Predecessors practice.

As to the Fourth of *Unity of Discipline*, if *Unity of Government* in all parts be not indispensably necessary to it, yet it will be so far, as not to abrogate, or invade the positive Institutions of our Saviour himself herein, and be more than convenient, that it be as conformable, as it is in our power to make it in one place, to what it is in another. It seems horribly presumptuous, violently to thrust out of the Church that Government under the influence of which Christianity hath been conveyed, and preserved from the Age of the Apostles in the most distant places, upon pretence of erecting a new better Scheme or model of our own, or because of the intricate use of one or two terms in Scripture, when the Church was in its first formation, though against the plain current of it in other places, and the uninterrupted tradition of the whole Church. A Church indeed must be more or less perfect according to its Government, for suitable will be the Exercise and Authority of its Discipline. What allowance may be made for those, who desire to come as near as they can to the Primitive Pattern, though it be not in their power to reach it in many considerable points, I am not now to dispute. But most inexcusable, and highly obnoxious are they, that by extreme violence, and usurpation endeavour to destroy what they found regularly established to their hands.

III. But we are here most concerned with the bold claims of the *Romanists* amidst their most obvious Defections, who have made it the principal Band of Unity

in the Catholick Church to be subject to the See of Rome, and the pretended Vicar of Christ therein, as the Universal Head, and Monarch of the Church: this they have determined as *de fide*, and put into their very Creed, and excluded all that do not expressly own it.

But against this as a great breach of Christian Unity we have many just exceptions, and been always ready to prove them so (4.)

a Bishop Carleton of threefold jurisdiction.
Dr. Barrow's Treatise of the Popes Supremacy.

1. In that no evidence from Scripture appears of any such Authority conferred upon him, or them: But many strong intimations of the contrary. The places usually alledged to make good their Claim are so far fetcht, and so little to their purpose, that they contain alone a strong presumption against them, and their own Authors sometimes speak of them with great distrust, Here if any where sure we may safely argue without daring to prescribe Rules to the most High, that in a matter of so great moment, had it been designed, it would have been most explicitly delivered, and solemnly inculcated.

2. But that it was not, we have farther evidence from the silence of the most Ancient, and best Fathers of the Church herein, when they have occasion to explain the places insisted on: (b) nay

b S. Cyprian. de Unitate Ecclesie post
doctrinam communiter allegata. p. 107. quamvis
Apostolis omnibus parem potestatem tribu-
at, &c. paulo post. Hoc erant utique ceteri
Apostoli, quod fuit Petrus pari consortio
præditi honoris & potestatis.

Idem & alii in Concil. Carthaginensi.
p. 229. Neque enim quisquam nostrum Epis-
copum se Episcoporum constituit, aut Tyran-
nico terrore ad obsequendi necessitatem col-
legas suos adigit.

S. Hieron. in Epist. ad Euagrium T. 2.
p. 329. Si auctoritas queritur, orbis major
est urbe. ubicunque fuerit Episcopus sive
Romæ, sive Eugubii, sive Constantinopoli,

expressly expounding them to a quite different Sense, and disowning any such Authority of one Church, or Bishop over others. And when the Roman Bishop began any thing tending towards this, and grounded his claim upon a falsely alledged Canon of the Council of Nice, not on any Divine Charter, after examination, and proof of the

the Forgery, other Bishops wholly disclaim it, and declare against it, it, and warn him for the future not to disturb their Regular proceedings by such unwarrantable practices.

(c) As the *African Bishops*, and the great *St. Austin* among them in the case of Appeals. It will be hard for them to find any thing like an Argument, or Example of it within the first five Centuries, at least which was not disowned, and condemned by the rest of the Church, unless from such forged Writings, which they themselves will scarce now defend.

five Rhégi, five Alexandria, five Tanis, ejusdem meriti, ejusdem est & Sacerdotii. Potentia divitiarum, & paupertatis humilitas vel sublimiorem, vel inferiorem Episcopum non facit. Ceterum omnes Apostolorum successores sunt.

c Vide Epist. Concilii Africani ad Bonifacium, T. 2. p. 1670. 1674. Concil. ult. Ed.

3. In the following Ages we have as good Testimony from History as almost in any other matter of fact, by what steps, and in what manner this still growing power of the Church and Bishop of *Rome* advanc'd it self to the height which it now claims.(d)

1. By Usurpation upon the Rights of other Churches, every degree of exaltation gained being the depression and diminution of them, till all power was in a manner swallowed up by the Papal ambition, and none left to any other, which was not dependant hereupon in its original, and altogether precarious in its administration. So that here alone it must be immediately derived from Christ, but to all others by Commission from him. Thus in the choice of the chief Governours of the Church all must await his consent, and confirmation, where he does not alone forcibly obtrude them, and must pay for it a round sum for an acknowledgment at their entrance, and an after tributary Pension out of their income, and take a formal Oath of subjection at their admittance, and own their own Authority from his delegation, and be liable to have their Sentences reversed at his pleasure, and flee as far as his Judicatory, and

d See D. Caves dissertation of ancient Church Government, and Dr. Parker of the Government of the Church for the first 600 years.

and stand to the trial of it, when he is pleased to call any cause to himself. Nay, if a Controversie arise between him and any Prince, or State, the whole Kingdom or Nation shall lie at once under his *Interdict*, the Clergy be with-held from the exercise of their Function, and the People from the benefit of Publick Divine Worship and Sacraments. Of these and such like effects of the plenitude of Apostolick Power so much talkt of lately, they would do well to shew us any thing like a Plea from Scripture or Antiquity within the bounds forementioned, or for some Ages after in the greater part: certainly so great a change could not be effected without some notice and complaints, struglings and contentions, of which Church History is full.

Their early Faith spoken of throughout the world in *St. Pauls* time. The eminent Zeal of the first Bishops of that Church, most of whom, if we may credit the account generally received of them, sealed to the former with their blood. Their continued constancy in the Orthodox Profession thereof amidst the corruptions or defections of so many others, particularly in the time of the *Arrian* Persecution. The concurrent opinion of the Foundation of their Church being laid by the two chief Apostles *St. Peter* and *St. Paul*; and the honour of the Imperial Seat wherein they were placed, &c. gave them great repute, and advantagious recommendation in those first Ages. None will much contend with them about priority of Order or Precedence. But when the preheminance of the first Bishop came to be improved into a *Patriarchate*, and that swelled into the the Title of the Universal Bishop, which (a) *St. Gregory* so severely condemned in the

^a *S. Greg. lib. 4, Regist. Ep. 32. Abst à cordi-*

bis Christianorum nomen istud blasphemie in quod omnium Sacerdotum honor adimitur, dum ab uno sibi dementèr arrogatur, &c. Et alibi in Epist. passim.

Bishop of *Constantinople*, and that at last grew into the stile of the *sole Vicar of Christ*, and Sovereign Monarch of the whole Church: when the interposition of a Friendly, and Brotherly Arbitration, which all persons in distress, or under the apprehensions of injury are apt to flee unto, and amplify, made way by degrees for the challenge of an ordinary Jurisdiction, and that at first from the pretence of *Canonical privilege* to that *Divine Right* and Sanction, and then to prevent all scruple about its determinations these must be back'd with the vindication of an infallible conduct: When instead of that charitable support they at first readily bestow'd on other Churches in their distress, they now made use of this power to rob them of what was left, taking the advantage of the poverty, and oppression of some under the Common Enemy, or the confusion of others through Domestick distractions, to raise themselves out of their spoils; then no wonder if other Churches complain, and struggle under that yoke, which they could not presently, or easily throw off.

Indeed, had not this claim of the Church and Bishop of *Rome* risen to such an extravagant height in the arrogance of its pretended Title, and been streined to that excess in the exercise of its assumed Authority; so as not to leave it in the power of other Churches to take all due and necessary care of their own members, or provide for them all needful supplies, these might more easily have born their usurpation of more power than ever they could prove belonged to them. They that have learnt the Humility of Christs School, and who are more concern'd to perform their Duty than vindicate their Privilege, and know how much safer it is to obey than command, and easier to be Governed than to Govern, will not be much moved at what others fondly assume, knowing still that the more difficult

difficult account awaits them. But then this Power became most intolerable when it was made use of to purposes so much worse than it self, which were beside the former;

a Cracanthorp's
defence of
Constantine,
and against
the Popes
temporal Mo-
narchy.

2. The weakning of the power of Temporal Princes, and disturbing the Civil Rights of men. (a) Although our blessed Saviour assured *Pilate his Kingdom was not of this world*, yet his pretended Vicar here on earth can hardly say so: for beside the Temporal Dominions unto which he hath entitiled himself a Sovereign Prince, there are few other Kingdoms, or States on this side of the world in which he hath not, or had not almost as great a share of the Government, as their immediate Princes; at least so far as to prescribe bounds to their Administrations, and subject in great measure all Laws, and persons to his Foreign Courts, Jurisdiction, and Decrees, yea, their Purses to his Exactions; and upon the least dispute hath withdrawn so great a number of his immediate dependants, who scarce own any other Governours, and raised so many disturbances, that great Princes and States have been forced at last to yield. Not to mention the Arrogance it at length grew up unto in dethroning Princes, giving their Kingdoms to others, authorizing their Subjects to rebel against them, or all ways to oppose them, and what oft follows, if not expressed, to murder them: as in their late Sentence against some of our Neighbour Princes.

b Sigonius de
regno Italiae,
and all other
Historians of
that time.

But before, much of this may be seen in the long contentions between some of the Western Emperours, particularly *Henry the Third*, and *Fourth*, and the Popes, as we have them described in their own Authors (b.) Also to go no farther, their various Contests with several of our Kings, especially *Henry the Second* and the almost continual complaints in all our Parlia-

Parliaments before the Reformation of the encroachments made by them upon the Civil Rights of Prince and Subject by vexatious and chargeable Suits and Appeals as far as *Rome*; by Insolencies and divers Rapines committed under the shelter of their protection, and defended from due punishment, and by their extravagant Extortions, &c. abundantly prove.

Now though these Usurpations grew by degrees, and were practised in a different manner according to the condition of those they had to do with, or the temper of him that managed them; yet they must needs seem more or less grievous to all, when power sufficient was not left to the greatest Monarchs to defend themselves, or protect their Subjects, preserve the peace, or promote the welfare, and provide for the security of their own Countries. Then no marvel if some of them grow weary of so insupportable oppressions, and at last take courage to grapple with, and extricate themselves from such manifest encroachments upon their own, and the Peoples Civil Rights, as well as the Ecclesiastical of the Church in their Dominions, and be forced to some harsh and almost violent methods, when the more gentle and benign could prevail nothing.

3. But beside these more publick Invasions upon Church and State, that which made the Usurpation more odious and insufferable was the farther abuse of the same extravagant power to bring in strange and dangerous Doctrines, corrupt, and unlawful practices into the Church, and impose them upon all in their Communion, exactly fitted to feed their Ambition, enrich their Coffers, secure their Authority, and promote their ease and Luxury. Such of the *first sort* are their Doctrine of Transubstantiation, and Purgatory, of Merit, and Supererogation, the multiplicity of Vows,

D

and

The Union of the Catholick Church

and delusions in the Principles of Repentance, and ministration of Penance. Of the *latter sort* are the Invocation of Saints and Angels, Adoration of Reliques and Images, their half Communion, the Scripture lockt up, and Divine Service performed in an unknown tongue, &c.

These and divers like them have proved great Scandals abroad, and stumbling blocks at home, and whatever varnish they may put upon them by the fairest pretences, or however they may cast a mist before the eyes of their Disciples by nice distinctions, yet they have so disfigured the face of Christianity, that he who compares the late appearances of it in the world with the model of it laid down in Scripture, or the Records of the Primitive Church, can hardly believe it the same thing.

But the particulars are not here to be disputed, they have sufficiently been confuted. and exposed by Protestant Writers, and were by several before excepted against, and disclaimed, though some suffered severely for so doing, and many more we may suppose waited an opportunity to free themselves from their pressure. That which I am now most to insist upon is this, that if the charge we draw up against these of falshood in judgment, gross Superstition or Idolatry in Worship, and immorality in manners, be true and impartial, as we have been ever ready to make good, and shall do against all the Artifices of the Defendants; Then no Authority whatever, however regularly founded, or unexceptionably conveyed, can oblige us to these, against the revealed Will, or Word of God, the Dictates of our Consciences, as we hope carefully, and rightly informed; the sense and reason of mankind, and the Belief and practice of the Church in the first and purest Ages.

Greater

Greater cause was there to endeavour by all lawful means to throw off such an usurped Power, that made so ill use of what it had unjustly gotten, and to restore Religion to its primitive beauty in Doctrine, Worship, and Precepts of Life.

But alas many difficulties lay in the way of its accomplishment, and all possible struglings, and contentions by force and policy were used by the adverse Party to prevent its beginning, or obstruct its Progress. Great was their Interest in every place; Strong was the influence they had upon persons in Authority; Numerous were their Assistants and Dependants at home and abroad; Weighty was their concern which lay at stake, and many were the advantages which they had of any that opposed them: So that no wonder if a Reformation so long wished for, and much wanted, were so slowly effected. It is rather more strange that in so many places it did master these and such like encumbrances, and in so short a time made so considerable a progress. If in some places it proceeded with less Order, Uniformity, and Calmness than could have been wished for in a Religious Reformation, Necessity in part, with many perplexed difficulties and encumbrances, may in some measure excuse what no Law before-hand fully warrants.

IV. But leaving others to answer for themselves, in my next particular I am to consider how regularly, and sedately it proceeded in the Church of *England* within the bounds of Catholick Unity.

I. With the concurrence, and encouragement all along of the Supreme Power to free it from any but suspicion of Rebellion. So it began at first with the breaking of the Papal yoke of Supremacy, the Translation of the Bible, and some like preparatives to Reformation under *Henry the Eighth*, and the united

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Suffrages of his Parliaments, and the Bishops themselves therein. It proceeded suitably to a further improvement in most particulars under his Son *Edward the Sixth*. And at last it came to its full settlement and establishment under *Queen Elizabeth*. The beginning and carrying on of the Reformation here was by such loyalty of Principles, and Practices that we challenge any Church in the World to a Comparison therein. Indeed this was so notorious, that her Roman Adversaries have turned her Glory into a Reproach by upbraiding her, though most invidiously, with the name of a *Parliamentary Religion*; because it received all along so much countenance and assistance from those great Assemblies of all the three Estates of the Kingdom under their Head and Sovereign.

2. But farther to clear her of all just imputation from hence, it must be added that the whole work was carried on with the advice, and mature deliberation of the Clergy assembled in Convocation, representing the intire body of them, and therein a National Council. That they from their Education, and presumed Knowledge, as well as from their Office, and Ecclesiastical Authority are ordinarily fittest to judge, debate, and determine of Religious matters, will be soon granted: But that the Civil Power may, and ought sometimes to remind them of their Duty, and restrain them from gross Defections from it, may be proved by several Scripture Examples in the Old Testament, and the Supereminence of their place. But happy is that Order and Unity in which both Powers are joyned together for the service of God, the security of his Church, and promotion of his true Religion, as it was here: though it could not be expected but the first attempts would meet with several difficulties, fierce Debates, and Controversies, yet still the entire establishment

blishment was ratified by the regular determination of the Clergy so assembled as before, as well as was after confirmed by the Royal Assent.

3. Yet farther to justify themselves from any affected innovation in such a change, all was done with the greatest Reverence, Respect, and Deference to the Ancient Church to clear their continued Unity therewith.

1. *In Doctrine.* The ancient Creeds were taken for the foundation of its Confession, the four first General Councils are received with great Veneration, and a particular (a) Injunction was laid upon its Ministers to press upon none the necessary belief of any Doctrine, but what may be proved from Scripture, and the general current of the Expositions of the Fathers thereupon.

a In libro Canonum in Synodo Londinensi, an. 1571. titulo de Concionatoribus. Imprimis videbunt ne quid unquam doceant pro concione, quod à populo religioso teneri, & credi velint, nisi quod consentaneum sit doctrinae Veteris & Novi testamenti, quodque ex illa ipsa doctrina Catholici Patres, & veteres Episcopi collegerint.

So careful it hath been in all points to keep within the bounds of Catholick Principles, in those first instilled into its young Disciples in the Catechism, and in those delivered in its Articles to be subscribed by such to whom it entrusts any Office, that the *positive* part of them will hardly be disowned by our very Adversaries, and can scarce appear otherwise to any, than the common Faith of all Christians of Orthodox repute in all Ages. And for other determinations in the *Negative* she only declares thereby how little concerned she is to receive or own the false or corrupt additions to the first unalterable Rule. No Church hath professed and evidenced a more awful and tender regard to Antiquity next to the express Word of God. Both which she oft appeals to, desires to be ruled by; and where their footsteps are not sufficiently clear, chooses not to impose upon her own Children, nor censure her Neigh-

Neighbours; keeps within the most safe, and modest boundaries; is not forward in determining nice and intricate disputes, which have perplexed and confounded many in their hasty and bold Positions, particularly about the Divine Decrees, and such like sublime Points, In which few understand where the main stress of the Controversie lies; It may be none can comprehend the depth of the matters upon which the Decision ought to be grounded. But alas how many have been forward to lay down, and fiercely contend for, on each side, their private opinions herein as the first Rudiments of Theology, to be placed in their very Creeds or Catechisms, and so a foundation must be laid for endless Contests and Divisions? But most cautious hath our Church been in not laying such occasions to fall in the way of any: So that both sorts of Adversaries have made their complaints against her for not being more positive, and particularly in such Declarations, though none can charge her justly with defect in any point of Faith so own'd in the best Ages of the Church.

2. As clear, and unexceptionable hath been her proceeding in *Church Government*, preserving that form, which from all Testimonies of Antiquity hath continued in the Church from the very Apostles, under the conduct, and happy Influence of which Christianity hath been propagated, and continued throughout the world, whatever different measures some other Reformed Churches have taken, whether forced by necessity, or swayed by particular inclination, or prejudice. The Church of *England* kept up the universally received distinct prime Orders of *Bishops, Priests,* and *Deacons*: not desiring to censure others, who can best answer for themselves, but endeavouring to confine her self to what was most Canonical, and Regular, and

and to shew how little affected she was to alteration from any establishment, except in notorious corruptions and abuses : And how necessary she thought due Order and Subordination in the Church to prevent Schisms and Heresies, and to give the greater Authority and advantage to her Ministrations ; and finally to free her self from all suspicion of irregularity in her Succession, derived down from Christ and his Apostles, which she, as much as any Church in the World, may pretend unto. And though some intermediate Ages have been blemished with much degeneracy, yet she was concerned only to separate this, but retain, and convey down to others whatsoever good and wholsom provision she received from those before.

Farther, to evince this, particular care was taken by express Law (a) to confirm the Rules of Government, or *Canon Law* before received in the Church till some better provision could be made so far as it contradicts not the Law of the Land, or the Word of God ; making as few changes in the outward face of the Church as was possible, and sensibly proving it her design properly not to destroy, but build, nor yet therein to erect a new, but reform an old Church.

* See the Statute 25 of Henry the Eighth, cap. 19. Sect. 7. expressly revised 1 Eliz. c. 12. sect. 6.

3. Alike Canonical, and orderly hath been her Constitution in matters of *Worship*. Her Forms of Prayer and Praise with the whole order of her Liturgy are composed with the greatest temper, and expressed in the most plain and comprehensive terms to help forward uniform Devotion, pious Affection, the most Orthodox Profession, and Catholick Communion. So that I think it may be universally affirmed, that there is not any thing required in her publick Service necessary to those who communicate with her, which any that own the name of Christians, or are own'd for such by the general body of them, can almost scruple: unless
because

because it is a *Form*, by one sort, and because it is *ours* by another sort. But how unreasonable herein are both? So careful she hath been to lay the ground of most Catholick Unity, and to remove whatever might obstruct it.

a Camdeni
Eliz. an. 1570.

This our Adversaries the Romanists confirmed by their own practice, when for several years, as we have been told (a) in the beginning of Queen *Elizabeths* Reign, they frequented our Churches, joyn'd in our Prayers and Praises, attended on our Sermons and other Instructions, and received (as some add) our Sacraments, according to the order for substance the same as now, and had it is like done so still, having nothing to object against them but from the after-prohibition of the *Pope*, who had reason to fear they who were so well provided of all needful supply, and defence at home might thus by degrees be withdrawn from subjection to his Authority abroad; that darling point never to be dispensed, or parted with, whatever else might have been yielded (b.)

b Camdeni
Eliz. an. 1560.

Our Reformers who composed our *Liturgy* carefully collected the remainders of true Primitive Devotion then in use, and separated from them all those corrupt additions, which ignorance, superstition, and crafty policy had mixed therewith. Therefore it is so far from being an objection, that any part of our Liturgy was translated from the Roman Offices, that while nothing is retained contrary to wholesome Doctrine, and sound Piety, it is a convincing argument of her impartial Sincerity, and desire to preserve Uniformity, as much as possible, with all Christians abroad, as well as at home in her own Members: securing all the Substantials of Worship according to the plain sense of Scripture, and the pattern of the Primitive Church.

And

And as to *Circumstantial*s and *Ceremonies*, she is sensible when they are too numerous how apt they are to darken the inward, and more essential luster of Religion, and prove a Burden instead of a Relief to its Worship, which she takes notice (c) *St. Augustin* complain'd of in his time: But have since so encreased in the Eastern, as well as Western Churches, that it must argue a great aw to make the Service look like any thing serious and Sacred. However this number alone, where the particulars are not otherwise obnoxious, tempts some to spend all their zeal therein, and diverts them from things more necessary, or gives too much occasion to others to quarrel about them. Yet withal being apprehensive how needful it would be to maintain Order, and Decency, She hath kept some, though very few, and those most plain, and unexceptionable in their nature, most significative of the end for which they were appointed, and most ancient, and universal in their Institution, and practice, hinted in the title of our Liturgy as it is changed from the former. And to prevent all differences hereabout, she hath expressed her sense of them so clearly, and explicitly, that one would think no peevish obstinacy had room to interpose a scruple however the event hath proved.

c Preface to the Common Prayer concerning Ceremonies why some are abolished.

Thus abundantly hath the Church of *England* vindicated her Reformation from all pretence of Apostacy from the True, Ancient, Catholick, and Apostolick Church, and shewed in all instances how careful she hath been to preserve the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace with all the Members thereof. Nor hath she been wanting in any respect or reverence due thereunto. No Church being more cautious, and sparing in its determinations, more Canonical in its Impositions, more Regular in its Succession, and more charitable in its Censures: making all necessary provision for

E

her

her own Children so within the bounds of Catholick Unity, that had other Churches observed the like method, or measures, way had been made for an univer-

a Τὸ τοῦ Ἰ. ἢν ποτε ἡ ἐκκλησία τὸ καὶ-
χμα ὅπ' ἀπὸ τοῦ προέτιν ἡ δικυμῶνης ὅτι
τὰ πρῶτα μικροῖς συμβολαίοις ἐροδια-
ζόμενοι οἱ ἐξ ἐκείνης ἐκκλησίας ἀδελφοὶ
πάντας πατέρας, καὶ ἀδελφούς ἐνεύειον.
S. Basil. Ep. 198. T. 3. p. 409.

b St. August. adv. Epist. Manich. T. 6.
p. 118. A.

sal consent; (a) and every true Christian where ever he came would have found his own Church wherewith to communicate without hesitancy in all Religious Offices. And as (b) St. Augustin observed in his time, he would have

needed but to enquire for the Catholick Church, and no Schismatick would have dared to divert him to their Conventicles.

But if after the confusions, and disorders of so many Centuries amidst such a depraved state by corrupt manners, diversities of opinion, and perplext Interests, so great a happiness be not to be hoped for now: that private person, or particular Church will clear themselves before God, and all good men, that do what is in their power towards it, and pray to Him to amend what they cannot change, and in the mean time make the best use of what means they enjoy.

Upon which Premises an easie Solution is given to the old cavilling question, Where was your Church before the Reformation, or that time?

We answer, Just where it is: Thereby no new Church was set up; no new Articles of Faith brought in; no new Sacraments; no new order of Priesthood to minister in holy things: all which would have indeed required new Miracles, and a new immediate Authority from Heaven so attested: only the old were purged from impurities in Doctrine, Worship, and Practice, which, in passing through so many degenerate Ages, they had contracted, and that an ordinary Power might suffice

to do. If we were in the Catholick Church before, we are so still, and hope, to better purpose. We are not therefore out of it, because their rash Censures have excluded us and then they unreasonably take advantage to argue against us from their own act: We never formally shut them out what ever they have done to us.

What degrees of corruption in Faith or Manners may be consistent with the bare being of a Church, or the possibility of salvation therein, is needless and dangerous for us nicely to enquire: it may be impossible for us to know. I am sure it is most safe for us to reform what we know to be amiss, and to leave those who do not, to stand or fall by their own Master. It is a very ill requital of our Charity if it be turned into a weapon of offence to wound, or slay us, by that by which we shewed our desire of their Cure. But they and we must stand another trial, and await a final infallible Sentence, which ours here cannot change. The best security that we know to meet it with comfort will be to use the most strict impartiality with our selves, and the greatest Charity to others.

Yet our Adversaries glory in nothing more than in the name of the *Catholick Church*, and boast in no Title so much as that of *Catholicks*, which hath had deservedly so great veneration in all Antiquity.

But their claim here truly examined will prove as fallacious and arrogant as in any other instance. For the term *Catholick* if we respect the notation of the word, or the most constant use of it, is the same as *Universal*, and so joyned to the Church signifies the general Body of all Christians dispersed throughout the World, opposed to any distinct Party, or separate Communion.

S August. de unitate Ecclesie, c. 2. T. 7. p. 510. *Quaestio certe inter nos versatur ubi sit Ecclesia, utrum apud nos, an apud illos, quae utique una est, quam majores nostri Catholicam nominarunt, ut ex eo ipso nomine ostenderent, quia per totum est. Ibid. c. 3 p. 514. Christi Ecclesia Canonica- rum Scripturarum Divina & certissima testimonio in omnibus Gentibus designata est. Et c. 4. ab ejus corpore quod est Ecclesia ita diffinitur, ut eorum communio non sit cum toto, quicunque diffunditur, sed in aliquâ parte separata invenitur, manifestum est eos non esse in Ecclesia Catholica. Et c. 12. p. 533. alud Evangelizat qui perisse dicit de cetero mundo Ecclesiam, et in parte Donati, in solâ Africa remansisse. Item de fide & symbolo, in eam partem de Ecclesia Catholica, T. 3. p. 149. Hæretici de Deo falsa sentiendo ipsam sibi cum violentia, Schismatici autem discissionibus iniquis à fraternâ Caritate diffiliunt, quapropter nec Hæreticus pertinet ad Ecclesiam Catholicam, quæ diligit Deum, nec Schismaticus quoniam diligit proximum.*

Thus we find it constantly applied by St. *Augustin* in all his Tracts against the *Donatists*, and so opposed to them who went about to shut it up within their own Party, and streitned Communion; therein too closely imitated by our Adversaries, who, in spite of name or thing, make the same inclosures about the Catholick as about the Roman Church, and are as free in their severest censures of all others, and as haughty in what they assume to themselves alone as they were, though not proceeding upon the same grounds. But what that holy Father every where preseth upon them reacheth as nearly our Antagonists; the indispensable necessity of Charity, that great bond of Unity in the Church, and principal evidence of the Divine Spirit, which animates the whole, without which the highest gifts, and most Sacred Ministrations are rendred ineffectual. This is one of the prime Characteristick notes of the true Catholick Church, and every living Member thereof, and nothing is more opposite to their Principles and Practices, who have formally excluded all other Christians and Churches from any share therein, not only those in the West, that have deservedly cast off that power, which they had unjustly arrogated, and tyrannically exercised, but also the *Greeks*, and others in the East, that never owned any subjection to them.

But most securely may the *Church of England* glory in true Catholicism, which to all her other privileges, and

and advantages that she may boast of above almost any other Church, still maintains, and evidences the greatest charity to others of any that I know in the world; makes no other inclosures than those which God himself hath made, not assuming any Authority to command, yea, or to pass hasty judgment upon any, but only to provide for her own the best she can, and with such tender regard to common Christianity, and the Rights of all other Churches, that she seems designedly to have chalkt out the way of restoring the most desirable fruits of Christian Unity throughout the whole Church; and we should have been sensible of considerable effects by it, had other Churches pursued like methods.

That Church sure is most *Catholick* that makes provision for the most *Catholick* Communion, Peace, and Unity, and which imposes no other terms or conditions of it but those most universally received throughout all Ages, in all places, and by almost all Christians; which may soon decide the competition, whether the Church of *England* more truly vindicates to her self a part of the *Catholick* Church, or they of *Rome* arrogate to themselves the whole? Or which are the Schismatics from it, they which exclude none, whom they own no power over, but invite all to them, and joyn with any in what is good, and agreeable to the Institutions of our common Lord; or they who shut out all but those who will subject themselves to their usurpt Authority, and most unjustifiable Impositions. (a)

Farther the term *Catholick* is sometimes taken for *Orthodox*, and so the *Catholick* Church interpreted for that which holds the Catho-

a Firmilianus de Stephano Episcopo Romae ad Cyprianum, Ep. 75. p. 228. Ox. Ed. Si quidem ille verè Schismaticus, qui se à Communione Ecclesiastica unitatis Apostatam fecerit; dum enim putat omnes à te abstinere posse, solum te ab omnibus abstinisti.

lick Faith opposed to heretical Opinions and Doctrines as well as to Schismatical Separations.

S. Cyril. Hieros. Cat. 18. p. 23. Καθολικὴ μὲν ἐν καλεῖται διὰ τὸ κατὰ πάντας τοὺς οἰκουμένης ἀπὸ πρεσβυτέρων γίνεσθαι, ἵνα καὶ πρεσβυτέρων, καὶ διὰ τὸ διδάσκειν καθολικῶς καὶ ἀνελλιπῶς πάντα τὰ εἰς γνῶσιν ἀνθρώπων ἐλθεῖν ὁρεόμενα δόγματα. Σοζομεν. Hist. l. 7. c. 4.

(b) In this sense the Church of England hath as good a claim in the Catholick Church as any whatever; Receiving all the Articles of Christian Faith delivered in Scripture, and received in the Pri-

mitive Ages for more than five hundred years. No Principles having been so formally declared then, and for some time after, as the Catholick Faith of all Christians, and as such necessary to be own'd, which she rejects: whatever private opinions there might be then among some eminent Doctors of the Church in which they oft differed one from the other, or although there might be some observances then generally received which she thinks her self not bound to retain.

But ill will this Character agree to the Romanists, who have added so many new dangerous Articles to the common Faith of Christians, not only beside the original Rule, which they cannot but own with us, but too often against it, and the professed belief of the first, and best Ages of the Church. Wherefore we reject not these innovations meerly from negative arguments, because not sufficiently proved; (and yet that way of arguing hath been always allowed in the Fundamentals of Faith, which must be grounded upon express Divine Authority and Testimony.) But we lay the greatest stress of our averations to them upon that direct opposition, which we undertake to prove most of them have to the common Faith, and revealed Will of God which they and we both own. And surely that Church in this acceptation is most *Catholick*, that relies on such Catholick Principles, and refers all others to be examined by this touchstone.

V. But

V. But in the fifth place some Objections lie in our way fit to be answered.

Object. 1. They urge against us that we reject several Doctrines since formally determined in the Church by the known and received Authority thereof in Councils more general, or particular, which they pretend were believed through all Ages, but then established when they came first to be called in question.

Answ. We are not much concerned in the first part of the objection, though very many exceptions might come in especially as to the formality, and regularity of those Councils: but as to the latter part in which the main stress lies here; we never refused a fair trial thereof.

1. From Scripture against which no Authority Civil, or Ecclesiastical, in single persons, or the greatest Assemblies, no time, or custom of what

ever date can prescribe. (a) This hath been ever received till of late as the perfect, and intire Rule of all necessary doctrines of Faith, and practice; of which abundant Testimonies may be seen in most Protestant Writers.

a Tertullian de velandis virginibus, c. 1. p. 172. hac exigere veritatem cui nemo prescribere potest, non spatium temporum, non patrocinia personarum, non privilegium regionum

S. Cyprian, Ep. 63. p. 155. Quare si solus Christus audiendus est, non debemus attendere, quid alius ante nos faciendum putaverit, sed quid qui ante omnes est Christus prior fecit, neque enim hominis consuetudinem sequi oportet, sed Dei veritatem.

S. Basil, de iudicio Dei, T. 2. p. 392. & ejus moral. T. 2. p. 423.

S. Hieron. adv. Joh. Hieros. T. 2. p. 185. & in eodem T. ex Ep. Aug. ad Hieron. p. 353, 359 &c.

2. We appeal also to the Primitive, and best Ages of Christianity which either knew nothing of these Additions that we can find, or sometimes give as express declarations against them, as could be expected at this distance. But to take off much of the strangeness of so harsh an imputation at first sight, wherewith we charge a great part of the Church for a considerable time, and that

that they and we may be less scandaliz'd at the first mention of these defections,

3. We may consider the various Cautions in the New Testament against corrupt Doctrines, and Manners, which at the least in general are foretold would creep into the Church, if some of them we now charge be not particularly described therein.

4. We may compare matter of fact with the experience of the like degeneracy of the Jewish Church in various instances so nearly resembling these as nothing more, and from the same plea of Oral Tradition, yet against as clear evidence, and as emphatical promises to preserve them from Apostacy as any particular Church at least can now pretend to.

5. We may consult the tendency of last mankind, In the best how weak it is, and apt to be imposed on; In others how prone to corrupt, and distort the best Institutions, cast a mist before the clearest discoveries, and offer violence unto the strongest convictions to shelter their vices, and promote their unwarrantable interests, especially in times of ease, plenty, and outward prosperity. In which we may compare common experience in lesser Societies, which however wisely directed at first, regularly founded, and strongly guarded on all sides, without a very careful Inspection, and sometimes vigorous opposition, so many corruptions will creep in as to need frequent reformatations to reduce them back to their primitive Constitution. And although an especial providence be concerned for the guard and conduct of Gods Church, yet neither Scripture, or experience warrant us to expect its happy Influence by miracles now, for the effecting of that which may be accomplished by the use of ordinary and regular means of his own appointment.

6. We may reflect upon the particular Ages of the Church, which we charge especially with these defections from about the eighth Century to the Reformation, wherein if all or most of them did not come in, yet they grew to that extravagant heighth, as to gain establishment for Principles of Christianity. These Ages are charged by their own Authors, as well as ours, and stand most sensibly convict of the grossest Barbarism, Stupidity, Ignorance, depraved Manners, and all such corrupt Inclinations in all Orders and Degrees, especially the ruling part, as were most likely to make way for such Changes, and Innovations.

7. We have some farther sensible proof of a design in many within that time to impose upon the credulity of others, and bring in strange Doctrines, and unwarrantable Practices, by the many Fabulous Stories, feigned Apparitions, and Revelations, several of which they themselves will hardly now defend, then brought into the Church to confirm these points in difference, and which almost only the people then received for their Instructions, to entice them first into an awful opinion of, and then a confident reliance upon these things.

Nay farther, among the many spurious Writings which then crept into the world under the most venerable names of the renowned Fathers of the Church, now mostly discarded by themselves, when their shameless Impudence hath been so fully exposed, yet few of them there are in which this contrivance is not legible throughout to advance these Opinions, and Practices. So that we are indebted to the Reformation, those great men which laboured in it, and some of the most moderate and learned of their own side, with the Art of Printing then but newly found out, that almost all ancient Authors, and Records have not lost their

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Authority, which would have been much endangered among such grossdepravers of Antiquity, whose constant business it was to mar good Authors by their Interpolations, Additions, or Subtractions : or vent new ones under counterfeit old names to serve their corrupt ends. But we are somewhat beholden to their ignorance, and stupidity, for doing it so grossly that there was need of little skill or observation to discover their Impositions.

8. To which may be added in the last place against the supposed presumption in private persons, or particular Churches to judge of publick Establishments by a seeming Superiour Authority : that without some judgment of discretion in the former there is no room for a proper Moral Act, much less are they capable of a truly Religious Obligation, which an absolute implicite faith perfectly destroys. But whilst every man is bound to prove his own work, and must bear his own burden, he must examine the grounds of his assent according to his capacity, and determine himself by the best motives he can procure, and is concerned at his utmost peril to do it with all due respect to the Authority and Judgment of his Superiours, as well as the evidence of the things themselves, which are no where in any Government beside thought inconsistent.

These Considerations duly weighed may obviate those first prejudices which usually lie in the way to intercept all thoughts of farther trial, and examination of particular Points in controversie, and may silence or shame the late idle vaunts of such who pretend to reason us out of our senses, and undertake to demonstrate it *à priori* impossible that ever any false opinion should get into the Church, or prevail therein. I wish these men would try their pains, and subtilty to prove

maintained in the Church of England.

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it impossible there could be any such thing as wilful sin in the world. I presume they might have as good Topics to pretend to it from all convictions of Reason or Interest. But after the most artificial composures herein they would hardly believe themselves, or be credited by others against their experience. It were well if they might prevail to make that less frequent which all must own so unreasonable in it self, and destructive to us.

Object. 2. But our Adversaries will yet urge upon us, that supposing, not granting such a degeneracy in the Church, and need of Reformation: yet this should have been done in order to preserve *Catholick Unity* by common consent in a general Council, and with most mature deliberation, and consultation.

Ans. 1. This was most earnestly desired, and insisted on by the first Reformers, witness the great Importunities of *Charles the Fifth* with the Pope upon their instance.

2. When this seemingly prevailed, and a pretended Council was called, it was far from being free or general. The Italian, and meer titular Bishops outnumbered all the rest, and both one and the other were overawed by the Popes immediate Dependants or Delegates, and all things carried by such stratagems of Policy, or partiality of Interest that the only care taken was to fix the disease, and not provide for the cure by the best account we have of those transactions: So that some Princes of their own Communion entered their Protestations against its proceedings, disowning any Obligation to be tied up to their determinations.

3. As the divided state of Christendom now stands, it is rather to be wish'd for, than supposed almost possible.

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From the different Interests and inclinations of Princes, who will hardly agree together in the Summons, place, or time of meeting, or about the persons who are to resort to it from their several Dominions. While the Roman Empire was intire, the Emperours Edict alone was Summons sufficient to almost the whole Christian Church. But now who shall take upon him to call or invite so many from so distant places no way under his Authority? And that the Pope ever pretended to this power till of late can scarce be pleaded against such clear Evidences, and Examples; and where he is so much concerned, it will be judged more unreasonable for him to demand it. If this difficulty were overcome by any consent, or condescension: yet so many jealousies, and cross interests are behind, that will be, and have been laid in the way of their first meeting together with a requisite peaceable disposition, as are not easily foreseen, and less readily governed; not to interpose the difficulties of the journeys from such distant places, and of the discontinuance so long from home of the chief Governours of the Church: many doubts and controversies of the number, and quality of persons having right to vote therein by themselves, or Representatives will not soon be adjusted, and without these and such like determined there is no preparation made for so venerable an Assembly.

*Æceleſiæ non
num rus Epif-
coporum. Ter-
tullian. de pud-
icitia, c. 22.*

After all, when never so duly met, we have neither Reason, Promise, or Example to suppose them now infallibly guided in their determinations, but that they or the greater part may be mistaken themselves, or mislead others, through passion, and false interest, or be carried away in the noise or torrent of a multitude, or be imposed on by the crafty. He that considers matter of fact, more than the finest Schemes, and most subtil Reasonings

Reasonings of his own brain, how things are oft strangely and unaccountably carried in publick meetings of men of extraordinary Fame: yea, in some Councils themselves, and some of very sacred Repute in the Church, (a) will think this no hard supposal: though their orderly Sentence carries the most venerable Authority below Heaven. It seems to argue the height of Blasphemy to arraign God himself of indiscretion, if it be possible for any man, or number of men to err from their Duty: And very presumptuous it is to charge the Supreme Providence of defect in the provision for the continuance of his Church if they be capable to fall away: yea, let God be true but every man a liar when brought in competition. He will not be tyed up by our most plausible Methods in the way of securing his own Truth, which shall at last prevail though condemned: whose wisdom is unsearchable, and his ways oft past our finding out. He will bring to pass his own holy designs, though by means to us most unlikely, or it may be seemingly opposite.

a *Greg. Naz. Epist. 55. p. 814. & Ep. 72. p. 829. & Ep. 135. p. 864. ejusd. Orat. 25. init. p. 451. Theod. Ep. 112. Vol. 3. p. 982, 983.*

Whoever seriously reflects upon these things will have little reason to quarrel at the Reformation for want of this formal establishment in Council.

No Christian, or Church is chargeable with the lack of that which it is not in their power to procure. Men may please themselves with remote Speculations, and the fairest hopes, and wishes of such an Authoritative Decision of the disputes in controversy; but if it be not to be had, we must rest content with, and make the best use we can of that provision which God in mercy hath indulged us for our sufficient satisfaction, and safety.

Every particular National Church directly subject to no other may, and ought to reform it self from known Abuses: keeping within the Rule of Gods Word,

Word, avoiding as much as possible giving just offence to any beside, and being ready to give an account of its proceedings therein to all, and to alter any thing that shall be found amiss, or add whatever may be proved wanting, to receive others into its Communion, and to communicate with them so far as may be consistent with common Christianity own'd by all, endeavouring to preserve Peace, and Unity with all that call upon the same Lord, praying to God to increase, and improve them more and more; such hath been the continued aim, and proceeding of the Church of England.

We believe no true Member of this would have refused the general Communion of the truly Catholick Church in St. *Augustine's* Age, or for some time after, though possibly every opinion, or practice then current be not suited to their present judgment, or wish. Neither can we think after so strange alteration of Circumstances through so many degenerate Ages, that holy Father in his eminent zeal for

^a S. Aug. adv. Criscon. Grammat. l. 3. T. 7. p. 263. Ego in Ecclesiâ sum cujus membra sunt illæ omnes Ecclesiæ, quas ex laboribus Apostolorum notas, atque firmatas simul in literis Canonicis novimus. Earum Communionem siue in Africa siue ubique non deseram.

the most (a) Catholick Communion therein would now have been much moved by our present Adversaries arrogant claims of it to themselves alone, though against the Rules and Principles of it with all others. No Foundation is laid for it here but by the absolute submission of all others to their usurp'd Authority, and rash, or impious determinations. Now who can hope for an universal Peace and Unity from such terms of accommodation, only fit for an insulting Conquerour to impose, like those which *Nabash* the *Ammonnite* propounded to the men of *Jabesh Gilead* to thrust out all their right eyes, and lay it for a reproach upon all *Israel*. 1 Sam. 11. 2

Object. 3. Sometimes they object to us the personal miscarriages of some engaged in the Reformation.

Ans. If any did what they ought not, or with unjustifiable designs what they ought, the Church is no way accountable; if what they did in the Reformation, as such, were good, and they had sufficient Authority for doing it, which we are ready to maintain, that is all she is responsible for, were other imputations really true, which they oft are not: However it will be an endless dispute, and if determined would add little to the cause. I may add, few great and publick Changes are brought about, where so many interests are concerned either way to promote, or hinder them in which all things are carried with that clearness and evenness that were to be desired. Private Persons are not chargeable with the supposed defects of publick Administrations, of which they have not the management if nothing be required of them against their express Duty, and they be provided of all necessary means of their Salvation, though they may be inclined to wish some things had been ordered otherwise.

Object. 4. Our Enemies on both sides are apt to object to us the want of due Discipline, if not absolutely necessary to the being of the Church, yet so far useful to the well-being, and perfection of it, that it ought to have great weight in determining our choice to one Communion before another, and is one of the most sensible bands of Unity in the Church.

Ans. 1. The restauration of the Primitive Vigour of this hath been always wish'd for by our Church, as in the Preface to the Communion, but the accomplishment is very difficult.

From the degeneracy of the Age, which would hardly bear it. He that Governs in a less Sphere will find.

find how oft he must bear with things, which he does not approve: and much easier it is to find fault with, than to amend what sometimes we know to be amiss.

From the multiplicity of Divisions, which weaken all endeavours towards it, and then froward men unworthily charge the Church with what they themselves make almost unavoidable; whereas, if executed, it would reach themselves as nearly as any who are now so clamorous against the most tender, and charitable endeavours towards it as cruel and inhumane.

2. The Pretences, so it in the Church of *Rome* according to general practice, so far as it can appear to us, and we can judge by nothing else, are more dangerous than any of these Omissions, when turn'd into a constant circle of sinning, private Confession, and Priestly Absolution upon the imposition of very insignificant Penance, and so over again. For hereby men have the Authority of their Church to confirm in them the dangerous presumption that they have thus readily cleared themselves before God, and so soon perfected their Repentance for such Sins, which we find them not so watchful against afterward, as that ought to suppose, or make them.

Whereas the Church of *England* commends private Confession for our clearer satisfaction, and direction in difficult cases as most needful: but cannot truly say that it is an indispensable condition of our pardon, which was never so believed, or practised in the Church for many Centuries. If people will not be persuaded to their Priviledge, unless they be forced to it by false denunciations, they must look to that; if they miscarry it lies at their own door, while they have no hopes here given them of pardon, but upon such an imixt Repentance as destroys the habit of sin, and plants

plants the contrary Grace; and what need they may have of the Assistance of a Spiritual Guide, and other helps in many Cases in order to this effect, they may best consider.

3. However the due administration of Discipline is to be placed among conveniencies, and advantages to be wish'd for, rather than necessities we cannot be without; and it hath been, and will be in all Ages of the Church more or less perfect according to a great many contingencies not to be stated before-hand. The Church hath ever judg'd it the best measure of using it so as may most serve the ends of Religion, and the general benefit of the Community, and not that she is bound always up to the strict merit of the persons falling under it; and yet after all the strictest care, and impartiality there will be room for the final Separation, when our Lord shall send his Angels to gather out of his own Kingdom all offences, and them which do iniquity. If we will shun all communication with these, though only in what is good, we must flee out of any Church that ever yet was, or will be, so far as we know, in this World, and so from any hopes in that to come: yet scarce any considerable Schism hath appeared in the Church, which did not shelter it self under this pretence.

4. Farther it may be alledged that several restraints may be upon the Church from the Civil Power. When this had suffered so much by former Encroachments, and Usurpations no wonder if it still retain some jealousy of that Yoke which with so much difficulty it cast off, and provide as securely as it can for its future preservation, though by suspending some of that outward assistance very conduceable to the due effect of Church Censures, and sometimes by putting a stop to their sensible progress, in some cases where no such

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danger or necessity required it. Men by mistakes, or prejudice may strein each power too far. Better experience of the Regular management of the Ecclesiastical, may in due time encourage the Secular farther to enlarge their Liberty, and encourage their orderly proceedings so as may be most subservient to the ends of true Religion, and the advancement of the common security of Church and State. All the power which the Church pretends to as such is spiritual, and that can make no alteration in the Civil Rights of men.

5. Yet after all, the Church amongst us hath not only sufficient Authority committed to her by Christ; but reserved, and countenanced by the Laws of the Land to resist her Abhorrence of all notorious Scandals, to the shame, and confusion of gross Offenders, and as a direful earnest of a worse doom that awaits them hereafter, not here prevented by a satisfactory Repentance. I need not refer to particular instances when we have frequent examples thereof. If this be not always exercised by those with whom it is entrusted with all due vigour, and sincerity, after just abatement for necessity, and a favourable allowance for such perplext difficulties, of which scarce any private person can make a fair and competent judgment, the fault will lie only at their doors whose is the neglect, and private Christians shall not fare the worse in the performance of their duty, nor fail of the salutary effects of the ordinary means of Grace by Gods own appointment, because every publick ministration is not performed with that Religious care which becomes such concerns.

6. Little pretence can they have from this Objection that desert the Establishd National Church, and that most advantageous outward Bond of Unity therein, in pursuit of private Assemblies, and select Congregati-

ons, where all Acts of Discipline must needs be supposed Arbitrary on one side, and precarious on the other. When he or they who inflict them own no power over them to aw, or direct their proceedings, or upon just occasion to reverse their Sentence; nor he who falls under them has any other engagement to submission than his own free Act, nor can suffer any farther prejudice without it, than to be forced it may be to change his Company, or place of meeting. What ever grave, and solemn appearance this may carry at the first setting up of such a new Government, it will soon degenerate into Mockery, or Confusion. Whatsoever destroys the Unity of the Church overturns the main strength, and Foundation of all Discipline; the defects hereof we may hope to see repaired with the preservation of that, but without that no prospect appears of any overtures towards it.

7. To which may be added in the last place, whatever want of Discipline any may lay to the charge of the Church of *England*, none can complain of her breach of that Unity therein, which all Christian Churches ought to maintain. She neither invades the Rights, nor pretends to reverse the just and regular Censures, nor countenances the Schismaticks, nor disallows the ministrations of any other Church so far as consistent with the express Institutions of our blessed Saviour, and the universally received practice of his Church, though otherwise mix'd with several corruptions which she wishes removed.

Object. 5. Lastly, our Roman Adversaries object to us the many obstinate Schisms, and gross Heresies, which have sprung up since the Reformation, and as they pretend out of it, from the forsaking of that bond of Unity in the Catholick Church, only to be hoped for in their Communion, where alone they say these are prevented, or soon cured.

Ans. The first part of matter of fact is too notorious to be denied, and too scandalous to be defended: but against the latter part of the original of these Schisms, and Heresies many just exceptions may be interposed.

1. The Reformation gives no countenance to them; but severely condemns them, and provides sufficient means to prevent or remove them; if notwithstanding wicked men of corrupt Principles, and depraved manners flee hither for shelter to hide their enormities, and abuse or pervert the most wholsom Institutions, and advantageous opportunities for their spiritual proficiency to the most contrary purposes; The guilt and ill consequence will lie only at their own doors. Christians must not be debarred of the ordinary means of Grace, because some turn this Grace into wantonness. St. *Peter* tells us of some who wrest the Scriptures unto their own destruction; but neither he nor any other then, or for many Ages after thought this motive sufficient to deprive the People of the use of them, made it rather an argument of consulting them with greater caution and diligence, lest being led away with the error of the wicked they fall from their own steadfastness.

2. There were many Schisms and Heresies sprung up in the first and best Ages of the Church, even in the times of the Apostles themselves, as appears by several intimations in their Writings, and in the immediatly succeeding, while many Apostolical men were living, and if we compare the account we have of them in the most ancient Authors, particularly in *Irenæus*, they were as wild, and extravagant as any of the later date: yet the Apologists for true Christianity thought themselves very injuriously charged with those blasphemous Principles, or flagitious Practices which they wholly renounced, or disowned.

owned. The evil one is always most busie to sow his Tares amongst the best Wheat. But that which is most to our purpose here to observe, is that the same method which the Orthodox Christians then made use of for the Confutation, and Conviction of Hereticks and Schismaticks, we still appeal to, by bringing them to the touchstone of Scripture, and next to that the most Orthodox, and Catholick Tradition. Whereas how short and easie a decision to all debates might have been fetcht hence, had they had the same apprehension of the Authority and Efficacy thereof by referring all Controversies depending to the determination of the Roman Church, the Mother, and Mistris of all, and to that infallible conduct settled therein: but not one word of that; only when they make their appeals to her after the expresse Word of God, it is in common with many other Churches, especially those of Apostolical foundation, as in *Tertullian*, *Irenæus*, *St. Augustin*, &c. where they have to deal with such persons. (a)

a *Tertullian.*

adv. Marcion.

l. 4. c. 5. p. 415.

Videamus quod lac à Paulo Corinthi hauserint; ad quam regulam Galata sunt correcti; quid legant Philippenses, Thessalonicenses, Ephesi, quid etiam Romani de proximo sonent, quibus Evangelium & Petrus, & Paulus sanguine quoque suo signatum reliquerunt; habemus & Johannis alumnas Ecclesias.

Idem de præscript. adv. Her. c. 25. p. 215. Percurre Ecclesias Apostolicas & proxima est tibi Achaia, habes Corinthum, si non longè es à Macedonia, habes Philippos, habes Thessalonicenses; si potes in Asiam tendere habes Ephesum; si autem Italiae adjaces habes Romam. Et ibid. c. 32. p. 213. de aliis. Quæ denique insistantur tamen in eadem fide conspirantes non minùs Apostolicæ deputantur pro consanguinitate doctrine.

S. Irenæus adv. Her. l. 3. c. 3. p. 232.

S. Augustin. de unitate Ecclesie. c. 10. T. 7. p. 531. ad Corinthios, ad Ephesos, ad Thessalonicenses, ad Colossenses. Vos solas Apostoli Epistolas in lectione, nos autem Epistolas in lectione, ac fide, & ipsæ Ecclesie in Communionem retinemus. Ibid. c. 16. p. 546. utrum ipsæ Ecclesiam teneant non nisi Divinarum Scripturarum Canonice libris ostendant: quia nec eos propterea dicimus nobis credere oportere quod in Ecclesia Christi sumus, quia ipsam quam tenemus commendavit Milevitanus Optatus, vel Mediolanensis Ambrosius, vel alii innumerabiles nostri Communionis Episcopi, aut quia nostrorum Collegarum Concilii in ipsa predicata est; aut quia per totum orbem in locis sanctis tanta mirabilia vel exauditionum, vel sanitatum fiunt, &c. quæcumque talia in Catholica sunt, ideo sunt approbanda quia in Catholica sunt, non ideo ipsa manifestatur Catholica, quia hæc in ea sunt.

3. The pretence of the most absolute Authority in the one part, and the extortion of the most implicit Belief, and blind Obedience in the other among them have not been able to secure themselves from considerable dissensions, and Divisions in opinion, and practice. If these have not broke out ordinarily into the most open Schisms, and Heresies, the stop is more due to the craft and policy whereby they oft compromise the matter between both parties, or to that outward force and violence which restrains them, rather than to any opinion which they themselves have of this ready means of ending all disputes. We find in the fiercest debates among them how little heed is given to this infallible cure farther than interest or necessity inclines them. There may be a way of preventing controversies, which destroys all Religion, and makes way for Atheism; in such a case I need not enquire where the advantage lies.

4. We may answer, most of those mischiefs had their rise from the ruines of the Church of *England*, when that was violently assaulted and broken, its Authority despised, its Constitutions vilified, its Order defaced, its faithful Adherents persecuted, then Faction, and Disorder, strange Doctrines, Phrensil Opinions, and all manner of looseness in Principles, and Practices came in like a torrent, and overspread the Land, which before skulkt in corners, and were little taken notice of. The Restitution of the Church hath in great measure put a stop to their progress; I know not of any Sect, which hath started up since that time: But almost every year before brought forth several. If her pains and care have not yet been so successfully prevalent as to recover, and restore all that have gone astray, she hath not been wanting in her endeavours towards it, which have reduced many; and it is no little time, nor
easie

easie task to repair the Ruines of such long Confusions, and Desolations.

5. We owe a great part of these Calamities to the same persons, who now charge them upon us; for beside the influence which their Agents, Principles, and Examples had in contriving and promoting those unnatural Commotions, and Rebellions in the State which I am not now concerned to examine; let matter of fact determine that as it hath been found more or less plain: Thus far we have abundant evidence that several of their Emissaries have herded with the chief of our Dissenters, and if some of the grossest Sects were not framed among them first, as seems very probable, yet most of them have been much fomented, and strengthened by them, and they have been oft found acting their parts under that disguise, and have employed on all occasions their interest to shelter, and protect them, according to the known maxime of their Policy, that the readiest way of effecting our ruine was by increasing, and fomenting our Divisions; here they have found their greatest harvest. For when mens minds are unsetled, and they grown giddy with being long turned about by every new wind of Doctrine, and are weary of tumbling and tossing from one Party to another, they will easily catch hold of any fancied support, and be sooner betrayed to yield themselves Captives to the delusory hopes of rest and settlement amongst them.

6. To all which may be added, much of that irreverence, and contempt of Persons, and things Sacred, which have made way for the forementioned sad Calamities amongst us are mostly due to their Oppressions, Insolencies, or Delusions. When the People had so long groaned under their tyrannical yoke, and intolerable burdens, and found themselves so oft cheated
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by their manifest impostures, no marvel if they be over-fearful of what they had suffered so much from, and afterwards too suspicious of being deluded again, and be soon tempted to transgress due measure in the use of their liberty, being just recovered from extreme slavery, though so many years have passed since, as will hardly admit of a tolerable excuse: Yet better experience, and longer consideration we hope in time may teach them to distinguish between the certain Interests of true Religion, and the hypocritical wiles of worldly Craft and Policy, and so to think a due respect, and Obsequiousness to those who sincerely manage the former, necessary to preserve them from being imposed on by the latter, and prevent their falling into the like miscarriages which they observe in others; And that Apostolical Government, good Order, wholsom Discipline, sound Doctrine, and Uniform Devotion may no longer suffer under the false, but most odious charge of Popery, and that they who have under God been most instrumental in reforming, and defending the Church from the real, and gross Corruptions thereof, may not still be oppressed with the unreasonable clamour of a meer invidious name, which they that use most know very little what they mean by it, only that it denotes somewhat favoured by them of whom they have deservedly an ill opinion. The case hath been too like exemplified in another Instance, especially of late years, in which many Hypocrites have so scandalously abused the most solemn pretences to Sanctity and Devotion for a covering or continuance to the most horrid Oppressions, Schisms, and Rebellions, that they have emboldened profane men to scorn, and send out open Defiances against the very appearance of Religion, and possibly tempted others serious, and hearty lovers of its cause to be too modest, and shamefaced in its defence:
yet

yet we hope unfeigned Piety will be always justified of its Children. Surably truly Catholick Principles, and Observances may vindicate themselves, though gross Errors, and Impositions have long passed under that disguise: Notwithstanding ordinary People, not always the best distinguishers, and who are often hurried from one extreme to another, do not readily discern one from the other, but having found themselves once cheated; be a long time over-jealous of a like design upon them.

VI. From the Premises duly considered will, I hope, in the close be inferred the strongest motive, and Obligation upon all among us heartily to embrace, and steadily to persevere in the Communion of our Church: to share in those happy Advantages and Blessings, which all who rightly improve it may promise themselves therein. She desires by all means possible to convince their Consciences, and incline their Affections to a willing compliance with their indispensable Duty, and highest Privilege, rather than over-aw their persons by severe Censures, or the following condign punishments. Nay, if necessity force upon any the execution of the last, when they will not hearken to the former, she pleads the same Charity for the Principle of both, not only to prevent others from being seduced by the same Errors: But also thus to deter them from more dismal Ruine here, and hereafter, which hangs over them persisting still in the same obstinacy. (a) Of all she hath the tenderest compassion, though making a difference, but without partiality. Some must be saved with Fear, and almost violently pulled out of the Fire.

a S. Augustin *adv. Epist. Petilian,*
l. 2. T. 7. p. 101. *Non vos occidimus,
sed ipsi vosmet verâ morte occiditis,
cûm vos ab Unitatis vivâ radice
præciditis.*

Men may make a noile with the odious name of Persecution ; yet our Adversaries of both extremes have little reason to object that, of which they themselves stand so deeply chargeable when in their power. But we relie not on that Plea, which however it offend them, would not clear us. No settled Government, Civil, or Sacred, was ever, or is more gentle, and compassionate in its inflictions than ours: If when this Tenderness was requited with new and greater Insolence, and more obstinate Contempt, Authority begin to put on a more harsh, and severe Countenance, and make use of the rod of its power to correct the peevishness of some, or restrain the extravagancies of others, it is to be hoped they will in the end find it for their edification, and not for their destruction, and may see cause to bless God, and thank their Governours for those benign Penalties, which almost forceably opened their eyes to discern that evidence which pertinacious obstinacy had shut them against in all other Persuasives, as (b) *St. Augustin* declares several of the Donatists had professed to him, and therefore saw great reason to recal, and recant the many clamours they had raised on this occasion. I hope we are not without many sensible Instances of the good effect hereof among our selves, though it be very different in some from what it is in others ; but the tendency of it is certainly to what is good in all.

b S. Aug. *Epist.*
48. ad Vincen-
tium. T. 2.
p. 167. 174.

Experience, and farther consideration may have made all prudent and sober Friends to true Piety, Virtue, and good Order ashamed of the popular Plea of Liberty, or that men ought to be left free from any restraint, or Impositions in matters of Religion, and Conscience; which must needs confound all peace, and overturn all Government in every Society, and so destroy the being of the Church as such, and expose private persons to all manner of strange delusions, and extra-

extravagant enterprises without the least guard or defence; beside the ill aspect it hath on the Civil Peace; I may add, It never was, and I doubt never will be practised by any Party of men, when they can do otherwise, who flee to it only for Sanctuary when they can find shelter no where beside. Would men but impartially look abroad, or consult former times, or but really consider what were like to be their state under any other settled Constitution by whatever favourable Character it may have been represented, they might find little temptation to querulous uneasiness in their present condition, and small encouragement to seek, and improve every occasion to quarrel at those few, and mild restraints laid on them, especially if withal they would faithfully reflect upon the ill use which hath been made of more remissness.

Indeed Christianity, which is the Gospel of Love, and Peace, and is almost wholly made up of Charity, inclines us first, and most, to the mildest methods, as most grateful, most likely to win upon other mens good affections, and to testify our own. But then this mildness may be turned into the greatest cruelty to the guilty as well as to the innocent, yea, to the whole Community. Our great wisdom will be so to pursue the former as we may avoid the latter, and I know not where it is done more cautiously than here.

If we were to examine the strange and stiff Aver-
sations in many to the Communion of our Church, we shall find them mostly owing to blind Prejudice, and gross Ignorance of what is required of them, more than to any other Principles. They have been brought up in a very ill opinion of our Service meerly by odious names, sly and invidious Characters given to it from persons whose sincerity and judgment they rely on, and so are before resolved against any farther enquiry,

and industriously shun all opportunities of better information either by personal Conference, or reading our Books. They think themselves sufficiently satisfied, and go on to hate and revile, but they often know not what, nor why. If we could bring them to make their own trial, who are always jealous of any attempts from us, matter of fact would be their best confutation, and their own Eyes and Ears prove their most effectual conviction, so as to wonder at their former obstinacy, which some of them have confessed upon this experience. I believe were some fierce Dissenters ask'd, they can scarce say, that they ever seriously read, or attentively heard the Liturgy, and know very little what it is therein which offends them; I am sure they will hardly tell us. Sometimes meer novelty startles them, and they are afraid only for not being used to it.

These, and many such little Objections, that we can scarce guess at would soon be removed by this sensible proof reach'd down to all capacities; and a sober, steady temper of mind, with a firm, and well-grounded belief in most of the material Points of Christian Doctrine, variously inculcated in the several Offices of our Liturgy, would grow up more and more in them; for want of this we find in several Zealots very little knowledge of the first Principles of Christian Religion, and indeed very little to be learnt from those manner of discourses and Phrases to which they have been hitherto used. But more particularly may these Reflections be applied to invite the Romanists amongst us unto the free, sincere, and cordial Communion with the Church of *England*, which once, though only to outward appearance, they generally observed, and have almost nothing to object against it but the rash, and Schismatical Interdict of a forein usurped Power. That
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the terms of our Communion are most truly Catholick hath been the chief design of this small Tract to prove, and thereby to prevent the common prejudice from the name of the Catholick, and Apostolick Church, in which, whatever they assume to themselves, we have as good a title to our share as any Church in the world. And no sensible evidence have we of our Communion with that Catholick Church, but by communicating with the more particular Church in which Divine Providence hath placed us, where nothing is required of us repugnant to the Bond of Unity in the whole.

Many of our Church, yea, our Constitution it self have been often charged, and reviled, though most unjustly, with too favourable an inclination to them of *Rome*: because whatever of good Order, and decent Solemnity, as well as sound Doctrine, and wholsom Instruction was found among them, is still retained and cherished by us. And that we are not so hasty and peremptory in unchurching them all together, or damning presently all that have been, or are still of their Communion, as some would have us: which is in effect for being more tender in preserving the Principles of true Catholick Unity than in pleasing some private humours or prejudices.

Still we must be aware that no pretended Charity to them, nor yet compliance with those who pretend the greatest opposition to them must tempt us to betray the Truth of God, or violate our Obligation to his Commands on either side; and within those bounds to consult, as much as possible, the Peace and Unity of his Church, and continue therein. If the former retort our kindness upon us in new Oppositions: If the latter load our religious care and modest caution with all those dreadful imputations due to others: If we suffer

suffer from both sides, whilst it is only for speaking the Truth, and doing our Duty, which we have no power to alter; we may justifie our selves before God, and our own Consciences, and in due time with all good reasonable, and considerative men, and then it is no matter what the clamours, and captious cavils of others lay upon us.

But yet our Adversaries of the Roman Persuasion must take notice, that while we are so wary, and sparing in our Censures of them, we are not the less apprehensive of the extreme danger which attends those gross Errors and Superstitions, wherewith we charge them, which have a direct tendency to their ruine, and very much undermine the foundations of Faith, and good Life, which they own in common with us. What may be their influence upon any particular persons is more than we dare determine, and think always more safe to incline to the favourable side, where it may be without prejudice to what is certainly true and good. Notwithstanding whatever our opinion be, that will not alter the case at last, and thus far we are most determinate that the corruptions among them are such which every Church is bound to reform, and every true Christian to keep at a distance from, as much as is in his power.

Whatsoever were the condition of those who lived in that Communion before the Reformation, many of them groaned under those Oppressions from which we are happily freed: nay, whatever charitable allowance may still be made for them, who now live within those Boundaries where they have little opportunity of knowing better, and are under vast prejudices by contrary Education, and the severest law over them: How far, I say, these cases may be pleadable, must be left to God and their own Consciences.

As for those born, and bred among us, who have been treacherously deluded into Apostacy from us, or will persist in their hereditary obstinate averſeness to us against the clearest conviction, which they may receive, and in opposition to the express Laws of God, and of the Land, to the perpetual disturbance of the State, and confusion of the Church; there appears no room for any excuse to lessen their Crime, or alleviate their doom, which will be mightily increased, when all manner of hidden and crafty Artifices, or open violences against the common Rights of Humane Society, and moral Honesty, as well as the Faith, and Charity of Christs Church are employed, and consecrated into a religious but blind Zeal for the destruction of both.

No marvel if the Nation awakened with the effects hereof, which it hath sometimes felt, and oftener had reason to fear, have provided some severe Laws for an aw over them, and to stop the first beginnings of such exorbitant attempts, ready to break through all ordinary inclosures, and which will hardly be restrained by the usual methods of Government. No temper is more difficultly mastered, or more mischievous, if let loose, than such a false fiery zeal, which neglected burns all before it.

But whatever may have been their Treatment of us formerly, or we may justly apprehend would be still, had they any opportunity, which God prevent: we ought not, and hope shall not ever desist from wishing, and endeavouring, as much as is in our power, their real welfare, and so of all our implacable Enemies, and therein their hearty Union with us in the holy Offices of Religion. and Fellowship of Gods Church where they live, with the sincere renunciation of those dangerous Errors, and Practices that hitherto keep them at a distance from us.

In

The Unity of the Cathelick Church

In Conclusion, instead of querulous expostulations, or catching occasions to find fault, we have great reason to admire and adore that gracious Providence, which amidst so many Confusions, Disorders, and Corruptions that prevail too much in most places round about, hath placed our Lot in so happy a soil, and provided for us so goodly a Heritage, and safe Retreat in the Bosom of that Church, whose Charity is as eminent as its Faith, and its Order as signal as its Purity; whose Arms are always open to receive its returning Enemies with the most tender Compassions, as well as to cherish its faithful Friends with the most wholsom and indulgent provisions; where nothing is wanting to ensure our safety, and encourage our proficiency in every thing that is good and excellent: which upon former trial of both the opposite extremes, the whole Kingdom hath seen necessary to flee back into, to repair the Confusions and Devastations they had brought: and in its most dangerous Convulsions here hath found the readiest Cure, and under whose name her very Enemies desire to shelter themselves: which finally engages us to express our gratitude for so peculiar Priviledges by a ready and impartial Obedience to the holy Doctrine we are taught, and a fruitful improvement of all those happy Advantages which we enjoy therein. That our Lives may be answerable to our Profession, and our pious, virtuous, peaceable, and charitable Conversation may be in some proportion as defensible, and remarkable as the Principles we proceed upon, or the benefits we lay claim to.

This would most effectually silence the captious Cavils of our Enemies on every side, and more powerfully invite them to our Communion than all other the most demonstrative Arguments: when their very senses would bear witness that God is in us of a truth.

I hope we are not destitute of some such eminent Examples of unfeigned Piety, true Holiness, and universal Probity. God Almighty increase their number more, and more: Yet whatsoever may be the effect thereof upon other men, this method would most unquestionably ensure our own firmest Peace here, and everlasting Salvation hereafter. Here we keep certainly within our own bounds, and may most safely, and profitably spend all our Zeal, while other men please themselves in diverting it abroad to what they have no power over. It seems horribly nauseous to hear men quarrel fiercely about the best Church, who live in the most open defiance to all Religion, and I doubt there are too many of all denominations chargeable herewith. Yet whatever the case of others prove, it will be most safe, and pious to bring it home, and close to ourselves. Be our Church, or our Profession never so much better than any other, if we be not also suitably better than other men, they will rise up in judgment against us at the last.

But by a careful and diligent observance of its sacred Prescriptions we shall justify our Reformation throughout, put a stop to the Reproaches, and shame the Calumnies of our Adversaries, and which is the Summary of all good intentions, and endeavours, bring honour to our great Lord and Master, the Author and Finisher of our Faith.

F I N I S.